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Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
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Draft report of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

1. In accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 68/75, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fifty-first session, reconvened its Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities.

2. The Working Group held five meetings, from 11 to [...] February 2014, under the chairmanship of Peter Martinez (South Africa).

3. In accordance with its terms of reference and methods of work, the Working Group had before it the following:

(a) Note by the Secretariat containing the compilation of draft guidelines proposed by expert groups A to D for consideration by the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, as at the fifty-sixth session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/AC.105/1041/Rev.1);

(b) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.337);

(c) Working paper submitted by the Russian Federation on prerequisites for promoting the consideration of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes in the context of the issue of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.338);

(d) Working paper by the Chair of the Working Group containing a proposal for a draft report and a preliminary set of draft guidelines of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (A/AC.105/C.1/L.339);

(e) Conference room papers containing the working reports of expert groups A, C and D (A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.13, A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.15, and A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.16);

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(f) Conference room paper containing the views of the United States on the proposal for a draft report and a preliminary set of draft guidelines of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.14);

(g) Conference room paper containing a working paper submitted by the Russian Federation on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities (basic elements of the concept of establishing a unified centre for information on near-Earth space monitoring under the auspices of the United Nations and the most topical aspects of the subject matter) (A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.17);

(h) Conference room paper containing a list of points of contact for the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.18).

4. At the first meeting of the Working Group, the Chair of the Working Group presented an outline for the work of the Working Group during the current session and a review of the progress made since the fiftieth session of the Subcommittee, in February 2013. The Working Group noted that all four expert groups had met on the margins of the fifty-sixth session of the Committee, in June 2013, and that expert groups A, B and D had held informal coordination meetings on the margins of the sixty-fourth International Astronautical Congress, held in Beijing in September 2013.

5. The Chair then invited the co-chairs of the four expert groups to introduce the work of the expert groups and their respective working reports, which had been made available in conference room papers, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its fifty-sixth session (A/68/20, para. 165). The Working Group noted that expert groups A, C and D had finalized their reports, and that expert group B would continue informal consultations on its working report with a view to meeting on the margins of the fifty-seventh session of the Committee to finalize its working report.

6. At the second meeting of the Working Group, the Chair introduced the working paper containing a proposal for a draft report and a preliminary set of draft guidelines of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities, prepared by the Chair of the Working Group (A/AC.105/C.1/L.339), and invited delegations to provide their comments on the proposal. The Working Group noted that some delegations had provided comments on the document before the current session of the Subcommittee and that those comments had been circulated to the national points of contact and uploaded on the dedicated web page for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs.

7. The Working Group noted that the draft guidelines contained in the working paper by the Chair had been put forward as they had been proposed by the expert groups in order to allow the Working Group to consider each guideline adequately before any attempt to consolidate the guidelines or otherwise change their structure or language was made.

8. The Working Group also noted that the focus of the deliberations on the set of draft guidelines was shifting from the expert groups to the Working Group and that the Working Group would take into account the valuable inputs of the expert groups

in its continued work on developing the set of draft guidelines. The Working Group further noted that the Chair would continue to consult the expert group co-chairs concerning the incorporation of the work of the expert groups into the Working Group and that the experts could continue to support their national delegations as the consideration of the draft guidelines continued in the Working Group.

9. At the third meeting of the Working Group, the exchange of views on the working paper prepared by the Chair continued. Proposals contained in conference room papers A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.14 and A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.17 were presented by the respective delegations putting forward those proposals. Delegations shared their views on the structure of the working paper by the Chair, on the possible consolidation of the set of draft guidelines and on the workplan of the Working Group.

10. At its fourth meeting, the Working Group noted that informal consultations had been held by the Chair with interested delegations during the current session. During those consultations, proposals for the consolidation of the existing set of draft guidelines and the timeline for the way forward had been discussed.

11. At its fourth meeting, the Working Group had before it a non-paper prepared by the Chair containing a proposal for a structure for the consolidation of the set of draft guidelines. The Working Group noted that the structure had been developed on the basis of statements and comments made and proposals put forward by delegations during the current session of the Subcommittee.

12. The Working Group agreed that, on the basis of the structure contained in the non-paper, and taking into consideration the views expressed by delegations at the fourth meeting of the Working Group, the Chair would prepare a conference room paper containing a proposal for the consolidation of the set of draft guidelines, for consideration at the fifty-seventh session of the Committee.

13. The Working Group noted that in preparing the proposal for the consolidation of the set of draft guidelines, the Chair would consult with the co-chairs of the four expert groups to ensure that the originally intended scope, application and effect of the draft guidelines, as identified by the expert groups, was preserved.

14. The Working Group noted that the conference room paper, to be prepared by the Chair for the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, would serve as a basis for discussions on a draft report of the Working Group, to be developed following the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, taking into account inputs received from delegations and decisions taken by the Working Group at that session. The draft report of the Working Group would be made available to delegations in the six official languages of the United Nations before the start of the fifty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, in February 2015.

15. The Working Group noted that the Chair would liaise with delegations concerning a mechanism to address questions relating to the terminology used in the draft guidelines, in the six official languages of the United Nations, and that the Chair would present a proposal for such a mechanism to the Working Group at the fifty-seventh session of the Committee.

16. The Working Group noted that the Chair had encouraged delegations intending to introduce proposals for substantive amendments to the existing draft guidelines

within the structure proposed by the Chair, or proposals for new guidelines, to submit such proposals to the Secretariat in a timely fashion in order to ensure that submissions would be available in all official languages of the United Nations at the fifty-seventh session of the Committee. Timely submission of proposals would facilitate the comprehensive consideration by the Working Group of all aspects of the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and the development of a draft report of the Working Group.

17. The Working Group agreed that the findings contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189) would be considered by the Working Group at the fifty-seventh session of the Committee, with a view to identifying interlinkages in the recommendations contained in that report and in the work under way in the Working Group, as well as elements for possible inclusion in the draft report of the Working Group.

18. The Working Group noted that the Chair would request the Committee to consider, at its fifty-seventh session, an extension of the workplan of the Working Group.

19. The Working Group noted that, in accordance with the agreement of the Committee at its fifty-sixth session, the Chair of the Working Group would inform the Legal Subcommittee at its fifty-third session of the progress achieved by the Working Group in the period leading up to and during the fifty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

20. The Working Group agreed that the Chair of the Working Group would consult with the Chair of the Committee and the Secretariat regarding the scheduling of the fifty-seventh session of the Committee so as to allow the possibility for the Working Group to meet during that session, benefiting from interpretation services.

21. At its fifth meeting, on [...] February 2014, the Working Group adopted the present report.